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ABSTRACT

This report presents statistics on the demographic, social, and economic status of the civilian, noninstitutionalized black population in the United States, based on the March 1999 Current Population Survey. Overall, Blacks continue to be concentrated in the south. The black population is younger than the non-Hispanic white population. Fewer black families are married-couple families. Black families are larger than non-Hispanic white families. Similar proportions of black men and women over age 25 years are at least high school graduates, but black women are more likely to have completed at least a bachelor's degree. Blacks participate in the labor force at lower rates than non-Hispanic whites, and unemployment is higher among blacks than non-Hispanic whites. Black men are less likely than non-Hispanic white men to be employed in managerial and professional jobs. Black married-couple families are less likely to have an annual income of $50,000 or more than are their non-Hispanic white counterparts. The poverty rate is higher for Blacks than non-Hispanic Whites and is highest among families maintained by women with no spouse present for both races. (SM)

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The Black Population in the United States

Population Characteristics

March 1999

Issued September 2000

P20-530

This report presents statistics on the demographic, social, and economic status of the civilian noninstitutional Black[1] population in the United States, based on the March 1999 Current Population Survey (CPS).[2] Topics include geographic distribution, age and sex distribution, family type and size, educational attainment, labor force participation and unemployment, occupation, family income, and poverty status.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Blacks continue to be concentrated in the South.

The Black population numbered 35.1 million or 13 percent of the total population in 1999. Most Blacks resided in the South (55 percent), 19 percent lived in the Northeast, 18 percent in the Midwest,[3] and 8 percent in the West (see Figure 1).[4] In comparison, the distribution of the 193 million non-Hispanic Whites was quite different: 33 percent resided in the South, 20 percent in the Northeast, 27 percent in the Midwest, and 20 percent in the West.[5]

[1]Data for Blacks include Hispanic Blacks, who make up approximately 5.2 percent of the Black population.

[2]The population universe for the March 1999 Current Population Survey is the civilian noninstitutionalized population of the United States plus members of the armed forces in the United States living off base or with their families on base, but it excludes all other members of the armed forces.

[3]There is no statistical difference in the percentage of Blacks residing in the Northeast (18.7 percent) and Midwest (18.4 percent) regions of the country.

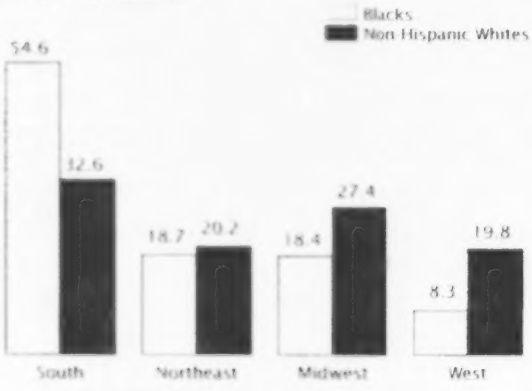
[4]The four regions of the United States for which data are presented in this report are as follows: **South**: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia; **Northeast**: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont; **Midwest**: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin; **West**: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

[5]Non-Hispanic Whites are used as the comparison group throughout the report. There is no statistical difference in the proportion of non-Hispanic Whites living in the Northeast (20.2 percent) and those living in the West (19.8 percent).

Figure 1

Region of Residence by Race: 1999

(Percent of population*)



*The percentages may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 1999.

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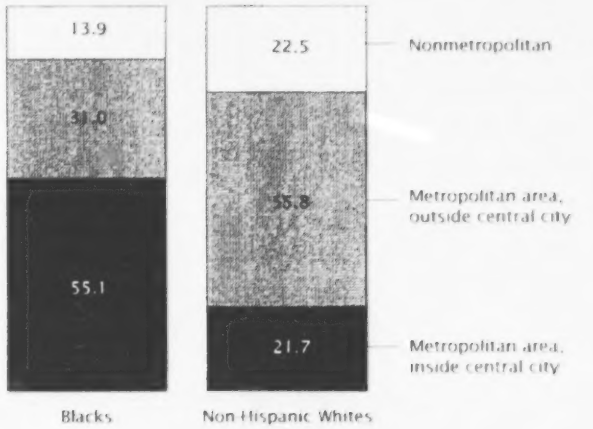
Blacks were more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to live in metropolitan areas (86 percent compared with 77 percent).* The majority of Blacks (55 percent), but only 22 percent of non-Hispanic Whites, lived in central cities of metropolitan areas (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Residence by Race: 1999

(Percent of population*)



*The percentages may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 1999.

AGE AND SEX DISTRIBUTION

The Black population is younger than the non-Hispanic White population.

In 1999, 33 percent of the Black population was under age 18, compared with 24 percent of the non-Hispanic White population. For the population 65 years and over, the figures were 8 percent and 14 percent, respectively.

A larger proportion of Black men (36 percent) than of non-Hispanic White men (25 percent) were under age 18. In contrast, 7 percent of Black men and 12 percent of non-Hispanic White men were 65 years and over.

More Black women (30 percent) than non-Hispanic White women (23 percent) were under age 18. Conversely, 9 percent of Black women and 16 percent of non-Hispanic White women were 65 years and over.

*The general concept of a metropolitan area (MA) is one of a large population nucleus with adjacent communities that have a high degree of economic and social integration with that nucleus. Some MAs are defined around two or more nuclei. The Office of Management and Budget, with technical assistance from the U.S. Census Bureau, uses published standards to define MAs for federal agencies. See the Office of Management and Budget, *Federal Register Notice*, Vol. 55, No. 62, March 30, 1990, and *OMB Bulletin*, No. 93-17?, issued June 1993.

FAMILY TYPE[?] AND SIZE

Fewer Black families are married-couple families.

There were 8.4 million Black families and 53.1 million non-Hispanic White families in 1999. Less than one-half (47 percent) of all Black families were married-couple families, 45 percent were maintained by women with no spouse present, and 8 percent were maintained by Black men with no spouse present.* The corresponding figures for non-Hispanic White families were 82 percent, 13 percent, and 5 percent, respectively.

Black families are larger than non-Hispanic White families.

Families were larger among Blacks than non-Hispanic Whites in 1999.

The race of the householder was used to determine the race of the family. Data do not include families in group quarters.

*There is no statistical difference in the proportion of Black married-couple families (47.1 percent) and of those maintained by women with no spouse present (45.1 percent).

Among married-couple families, 34 percent of Black families consisted of only two members, compared with 45 percent of non-Hispanic White families (see Figure 3). Black married-couple families were more likely than their non-Hispanic White counterparts to have five or more members, 20 percent and 12 percent, respectively. For families maintained by women with no spouse present, 37 percent of Black families consisted of two members compared with 57 percent of non-Hispanic White families. The proportions of Black and non-Hispanic White families maintained by women with five or more members were 14 percent and 5 percent, respectively. A similar proportion of Black and non-Hispanic White male householder families with no spouse present consisted of two people (62 percent compared with 61 percent, respectively).

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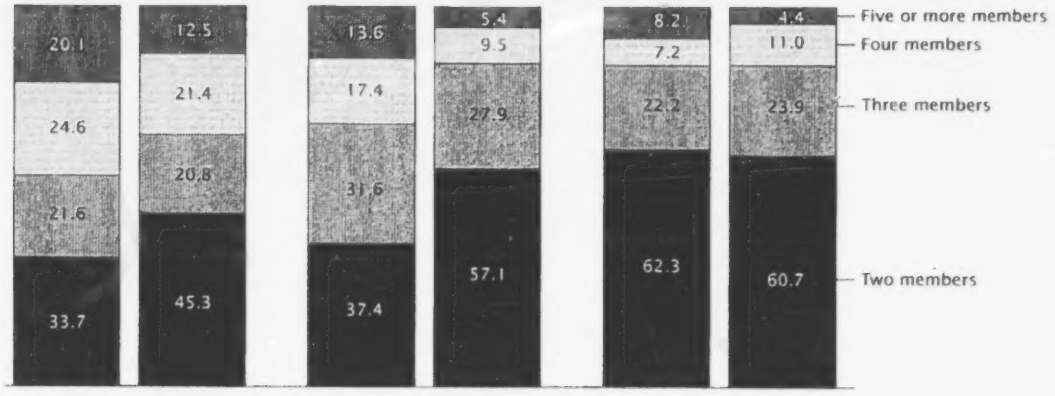
Figure 3.

Family Size by Type and Race of Householder: 1999

(Percent of families*)

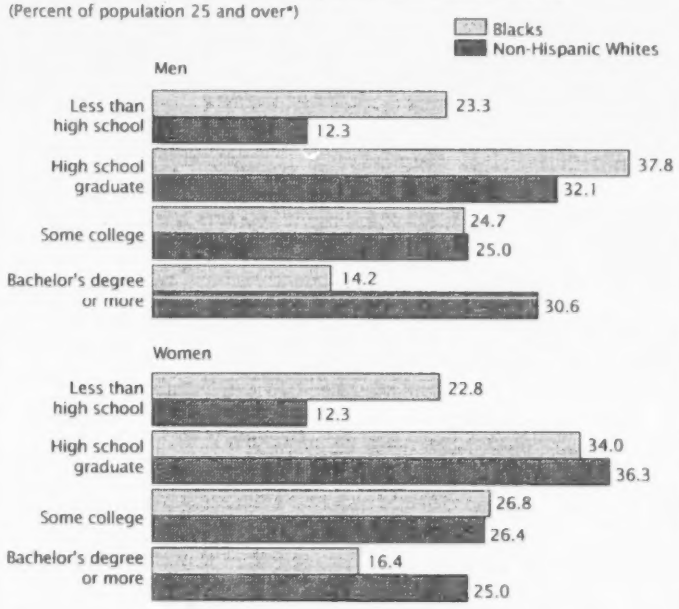


*The percentages may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 1999.

Figure 4.

Educational Attainment by Sex and Race: 1999

(Percent of population 25 and over*)



*The percentages may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 1999.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Similar proportions of Black men and women 25 years and over are at least high school graduates, but Black women are more likely to have completed at least a bachelor's degree.

The proportion of the Black population age 25 years and over with a high school diploma or more was 11 percentage points lower than that of comparable non-Hispanic Whites, 77 percent and 88 percent, respectively. The proportion of non-Hispanic Whites with at least a bachelor's degree (28 percent) was almost twice that of Blacks (15 percent).

Among Blacks, a higher proportion of women than of men had earned at least a bachelor's degree: 16 percent compared with 14 percent (see Figure 4). The reverse was true for non-Hispanic Whites: 25 percent of women compared

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with 31 percent of men had earned at least a bachelor's degree.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Blacks participate in the labor force at a lower rate than non-Hispanic Whites.

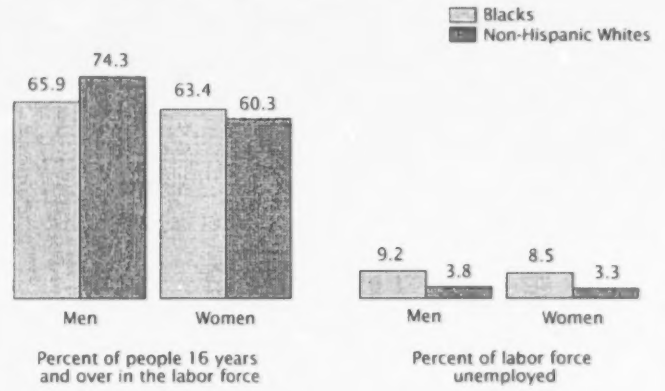
In March 1999, there were 16 million Blacks and 102 million non-Hispanic Whites 16 years and over in the civilian labor force. Blacks made up 12 percent of the civilian labor force compared with 74 percent for non-Hispanic Whites.

Non-Hispanic Whites had higher civilian labor force participation rates than Blacks, and for both groups men had higher rates[9] than women. In March 1999, non-Hispanic White men had a labor force participation rate of 74 percent compared with 66 percent for Black men; for women the rates were 63 percent for Blacks and 60 percent for non-Hispanic Whites (see Figure 5).

Unemployment is higher among Blacks than non-Hispanic Whites.

In March 1999, the unemployment rate for Blacks was more than twice that for non-Hispanic Whites (9 percent and 4 percent, respectively). This finding held for both men (9 percent compared with 4 percent) and for women (9 percent compared with 3 percent).

Figure 5.
Civilian Labor Force Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate by Sex and Race: 1999



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 1999.

OCCUPATION[10]

Black men are less likely than non-Hispanic White men to be employed in managerial and professional jobs.

In March 1999, the proportion of employed non-Hispanic White men (32 percent) in managerial and professional specialty occupations was almost twice that of Black men (17 percent). About 20 percent of both non-Hispanic White and of Black men were in the technical, sales, and administrative support occupations. Non-Hispanic White men (19 percent) were more likely than Black men (14 percent) to be in precision production, craft, and repair jobs. On the other hand, Black men (17 percent) were twice as likely as non-Hispanic White men (8 percent) to work in service occupations, and almost twice as likely (31 percent compared with 17 percent) to be operators, fabricators, and laborers.

Non-Hispanic White women (35 percent) were more likely than Black women (24 percent) to be in managerial and professional specialty jobs, as well as in technical, sales, and administrative support jobs (41 percent and 38 percent, respectively). Conversely, Black women (27 percent) were more likely than non-Hispanic White women (15 percent) to be employed in service occupations, or as operators, fabricators, and laborers (9 percent and 6 percent, respectively).

FAMILY INCOME[11]

Black married-couple families are less likely than their non-Hispanic White counterparts to have an annual income of $50,000 or more.

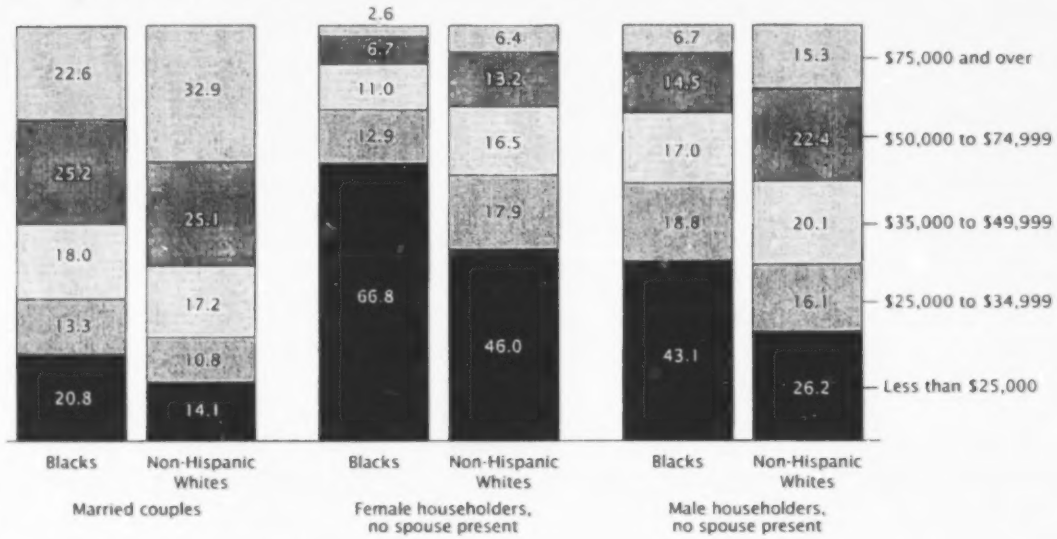
In 1998, 28 percent of all Black families and 52 percent of all non-Hispanic White families had incomes of $50,000 or more.

[9]Civilian labor force and occupation data reflect characteristics of the civilian noninstitutionalized population for March 1999 and are not adjusted for seasonal changes. Data released by the Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics may not agree entirely with data shown in this report because of their seasonal adjustment.

[10]The data on current occupation are for the employed civilian population 15 years and older.

[11]Data for all families include a small number in group quarters. Income is the sum of wages and salaries, net income from self-employment, and income other than earnings. Income data refer to calendar year 1998.

Figure 6.
Family Income by Family Type and Race of Householder: 1998
(Percent of families*)



*The percentages may not add to 100.0 percent because of rounding.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 1999.

Married-couple families were more likely than others to be in this group — 48 percent of Blacks and 58 percent of non-Hispanic Whites (see Figure 6). Twenty-three percent of Black married-couple families reported an income of at least $75,000, while 33 percent of non-Hispanic White married-couple families reported an income in the same range.

Black and non-Hispanic White families maintained by women with no spouse present were more likely to have incomes concentrated in the lower income intervals: 67 percent and 46 percent had incomes less than $25,000, respectively. The corresponding figures for Black and non-Hispanic White families maintained by men with no spouse present were 43 percent and 26 percent.

POVERTY STATUS[12]

The poverty rate is higher for Blacks than for non-Hispanic Whites.

An estimated 34.5 million people were in poverty in 1998, including 9.1 million Blacks and 15.8 million non-Hispanic Whites. The poverty rate, which was 13 percent for the total population, was 26 percent for Blacks and 8 percent for non-Hispanic Whites. Among all children under age 18, the poverty rate was 19 percent, (see Figure 7), but three times as high for Black (37 percent) as for non-Hispanic White children (11 percent). Poverty rates were lower among people 65 years and over, 10 percent in 1998 — but the same pattern prevailed. The poverty rates in this age group for Blacks and non-Hispanic Whites were 26 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

About 11 percent of all men were below the official poverty line in 1998. The poverty rate for Black men (23 percent) was three times that for non-Hispanic White men (7 percent), but it was four times as high for men 65 and over: 21 percent and 5 percent, respectively (see Figure 8).

In 1998, 14 percent of all women were poor. The poverty rate for Black women (29 percent) was three times as high as that for non-Hispanic White women (9 percent), as was the case for those 65 and

[12]In 1998, the poverty threshold for a family of four was $16,600. Poverty statistics exclude unrelated individuals under 15 years. For more information, see Dalaker, Joseph, U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, Series P60-207, *Poverty in the United States: March 1998*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1999. Poverty data refer to calendar year 1998.

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older: 30 percent and 10 percent, respectively.

Poverty is highest among families maintained by women with no spouse present for both Black and non-Hispanic White families.

In 1998, 7.2 million families in the United States lived below the poverty level. Among these families, 2.0 million were Black and 3.3 million were non-Hispanic White. However, a greater percentage of Black than non-Hispanic White families were poor: 23 percent compared with 6 percent.

A larger proportion of Black married-couple families (7 percent) than of comparable non-Hispanic White families (4 percent) were poor. Poverty was highest in families maintained by women with no spouse present: 41 percent for Blacks compared with 21 percent for non-Hispanic Whites. Black families maintained by men with no spouse present had a higher percent in poverty (20 percent) than comparable non-Hispanic White families (8 percent).

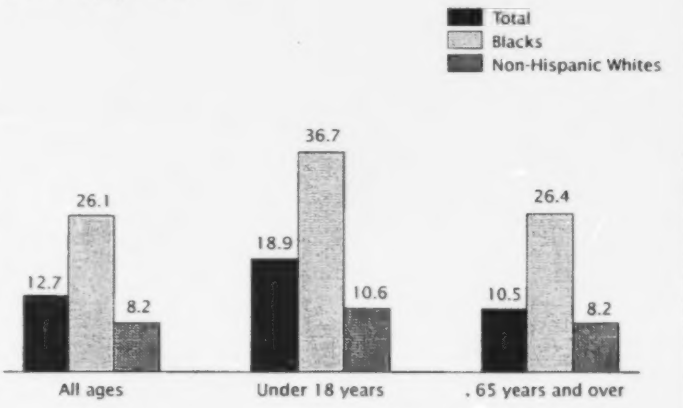
SOURCE OF DATA

The estimates in this report come from data obtained in March 1999 from the Current Population Survey (CPS). The Census Bureau conducts the CPS every month, although this report uses only data from the March survey.

ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

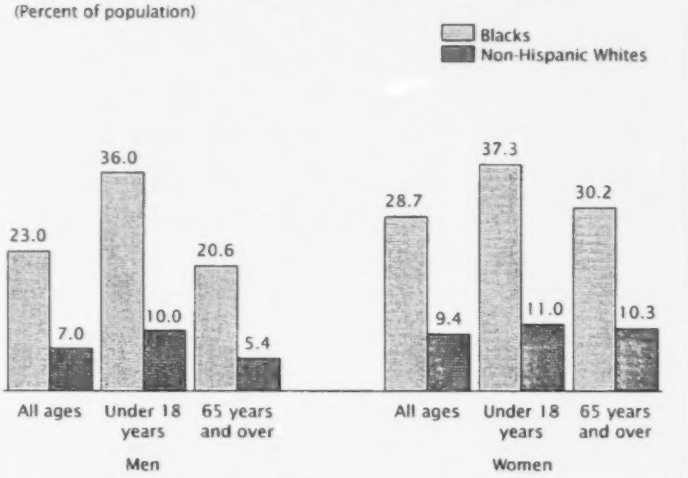
Statistics from surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and meet the Census Bureau's standards for statistical significance. Nonsampling error in surveys may be attributed to a variety of sources, such as how the survey was designed, how respondents interpret questions, how able and willing respondents are to provide correct answers, and how accurately the answers are coded and classified. The Census Bureau employs quality control procedures throughout the production process — including the overall design of surveys, the wording of questions, review of the work of interviewers and coders, and statistical review of reports.

Figure 7.
People in Poverty by Age and Race: 1998
(Percent of population)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 1999.

Figure 8.
People in Poverty by Age, Sex, and Race: 1998
(Percent of population)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 1999.

The Current Population Survey employs ratio estimation, whereby sample estimates are adjusted to independent estimates of the national population by age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin. This weighting partially corrects for bias due to undercoverage, but how it affects different variables in the survey is not precisely known. Moreover, biases may also be present when people who are missed in the survey differ from those interviewed in ways other than the categories used in weighting (age, race, sex, and Hispanic origin). All of these considerations affect comparisons across different surveys or data sources.

For further information on statistical standards and the computation and use of standard errors, contact the Demographic Statistical Methods Division on the Internet at: DSMD_S&A@census.gov.

MORE INFORMATION

Detailed tables with social and economic characteristics of Blacks, non-Hispanic Whites, and other races, and their families and households are available on the Internet (www.census.gov); search by clicking on "B" for "*Blacks*" under the "Subjects A-Z" heading on the Census Bureau's home page.

To receive a paper copy of these tables, send a request for "PPL-130, The Black Population in the United States: March 1999" along with a check or money order in the amount of $22.00 payable to Commerce-Census-88-00-9010, to U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, P.O. Box 277943, Atlanta, GA 30384-7943, or call our Statistical Information Staff on 301-457-2422. A copy of these tabulations will be made available to any existing CPR-P20 subscriber without charge, provided that the request is made within 3 months of the issue date of this report by contacting our Statistical Information Staff.

SUGGESTED CITATION

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